

NEWS RELEASE



OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

San Diego, California

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For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - September 25, 2006

United States Attorney Carol C. Lam announced that United States District Court Judge M. James Lorenz today sentenced Syed Mustajab Shah in federal court in San Diego to serve 225 months in custody, followed by 5 years of supervised release for his role in an international drugs-for-weapons transaction. Shah previously pled guilty to one count of conspiracy to distribute heroin and hashish, and one count of conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists.

In connection with his previous guilty pleas, Shah admitted that he conspired with codefendants Muhamed Abid Afridi and Ilyas Ali to distribute approximately five metric tons of hashish and 600 kilograms of heroin originating in Pakistan to undercover United States law enforcement officers. Additionally, he admitted that the codefendants sought to receive, as partial payment for the drugs, four "Stinger" anti-aircraft missiles which they intended to then sell to the Taliban, an organization they knew at the time to be the same as Al-Qaeda.

According to the indictment, on September 15, 2002, Shah, Afridi and Ali traveled from Karachi, Pakistan, to Hong Kong, People's Republic of China, to meet with undercover law enforcement officers from the United States to negotiate for the sale of large quantities of hashish and heroin. On September 16, 2002, Shah, Afridi and Ali agreed that the purchase price of 5 metric tons of hashish and 600 kilograms of heroin could be offset against the cost of 4 "Stinger" anti-aircraft missiles. On September 18, 2002, at a hotel in Hong Kong, Shah, Afridi, and Ali told undercover agents that they intended to sell the "Stinger" anti-aircraft missiles, discussed during the previous meeting, to members of the Taliban, which they indicated was the same as Al-Qaeda.

According to Assistant United States Attorneys Michael P. Skerlos and Todd W. Robinson, who prosecuted the case, Shah, Afridi and Ali were arrested in Hong Kong on September 20, 2002, by Chinese law enforcement authorities, at the request of the United States Government. They were indicted by a federal grand jury on October 30, 2002.

United States Attorney Carol C. Lam said, "We pursue those who support terrorists as relentlessly as we pursue terrorists themselves. Shah operated in the shady but very real world of narco-terrorism."

FBI Special Agent in Charge Daniel R. Dzwilewski commented, "The FBI is committed to pursuing those who put the security of the United States in jeopardy. Regardless of the criminal activity being utilized to fund terrorist organizations, we will investigate those who we suspect to be involved with fervor."

Codefendants Muhamed Abid Afridi and Ilyas Ali previously pled guilty to felony charges of conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists and conspiracy to distribute heroin and hashish and have been sentenced.

DEFENDANT

Case Number: 02CR2912-L

Syed Mustajab Shah

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Count 1: Title 21, United States Code, Sections 841(a) and 846 - Conspiracy to distribute heroin and hashish - Maximum Penalties: Life in prison, \$4,000,000.00 fine

Count 3: Title 18, United States Code, Sections 2339B(a)(1) and (d) - Providing Material Support to Terrorists - Maximum Penalties: 15 years in prison, \$250,000.00 fine

AGENCY

Federal Bureau of Investigation